

Nearly 1 in 3 Older Adults Not Prepared For Living with Endemic COVID-19

Research by SMU's Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA) highlights that among older adults, maintaining trust in the government's response is important for ensuring preparedness

Singapore, 25 January 2022 (Tuesday) – A new study by SMU's [Centre for Research on Successful Ageing \(ROSA\)](#) revealed that nearly 1 in 3 of Singapore's older adults surveyed in October 2021 did not feel mentally prepared for living with an endemic COVID-19. Older adults who did not trust the government's response to the COVID-19 situation in Singapore were four times more likely to feel unprepared.

Findings from the study suggest that the level of trust that older adults have in the government significantly shapes the level of perceived infection and mortality risk from COVID-19. With the emergence of the transmissible Omicron strain and predicted surge in the number of cases in Singapore in the coming weeks, researchers suggest for authorities to keep in mind that maintaining trust in the government is an important means to reducing the perceived risk of infection and mortality, a likely source of stress for older adults.

"As Singapore transits from pandemic to endemic COVID-19, we must ensure that all social groups are well-prepared and supported. ROSA has found that among older adults, maintaining trust in the government is an important factor in ensuring preparedness. This emphasises how important it is for all Singaporeans to work together in transitioning to the endemic phase – we must remain a cohesive society so that nobody is left behind in this transition," said Professor Paulin Straughan, Director, ROSA.

ROSA's report, titled, "[Older Adult Preparedness for Living with Endemic Covid-19](#)" uses data from the Singapore Life Panel®, a population representative monthly survey of Singaporeans aged 56-75 (inclusive) in 2021 that has been conducted since 2015. The SLP has an average response rate of about 7,200 respondents per month and is web-based, allowing respondents to participate even during periods of full or partial social lockdown.

Full details of the report can be accessed [here](#).

This report was made possible with the generosity of The Ngee Ann Kongsi and support from the Ministry of Education under its Academic Research Fund Tier 3 program.

Key findings and recommendations:

1. Mental Preparedness for living with an endemic COVID-19

- About 30% of older adults felt 'Not at all prepared' or 'Not too well prepared' mentally for living with an endemic COVID-19.
- Older adults who did not trust the government's response to the COVID-19 situation in Singapore at all were four times more likely to feel 'Not at all' or 'Not too well' prepared mentally for living with an endemic COVID-19 as compared to respondents who trusted the government's response completely.
- Due to the central role the government plays as a primary source of authoritative information on the pandemic, older adults with less trust in the government may be more

inclined to mistrust pandemic information put forth by the government. With a lack of reliable sources to inform themselves with, these older adults may feel more uncertain and less prepared for the endemic. *(Refer to Pages 5-7 of the report for details)*

2. Willingness to get booster shot

- Only 2.92% of respondents stated that they did not intend to get a booster shot.
- The top 3 reasons for not wanting to get a booster shot have to do with concerns about the safety and efficacy of the booster shot.
- Respondents who had already gotten their booster shot in November 2021 were twice as likely to trust the government's response to the COVID-19 situation as compared to respondents who did not intend to receive the booster shot. *(Refer to Pages 7-10 of the report for details)*

3. Opinions on Vaccinated Travel Lanes (VTLs)

- 86.7% reported some level of concern about the possible spread of COVID-19 from incoming tourists via VTLs.
- Respondents who were less trusting of the government were more concerned about an increase in COVID-19 transmission via VTLs – respondents who did not trust the government's response to the COVID-19 situation at all were almost twice as likely to be moderately or very concerned about COVID-19 transmission via VTLs, as compared to respondents who trusted the government's response completely. *(Refer to Pages 16-18 of the report for details)*

Based on the findings listed above, ROSA makes two general policy recommendations for consideration *(Refer to Pages 20-22 of the report for details)*:

1. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining older adults' trust in the government's response to COVID-19 in preparing and helping them to live with an endemic COVID-19. Authorities can adopt several strategies in order to do this, including providing clear and consistent messaging with regards to issues relating to COVID-19, as well as transparency in and accountability for COVID-19 policies that are enacted.
2. More can be done in, firstly, further educating older adults on what living with an endemic COVID-19 would mean for them, and secondly, providing older adults with the necessary resources to cope with living with an endemic COVID-19, such as organising and developing social activities for older adults that can still be run in spite of restrictions.

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About the Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA)

ROSA is a multidisciplinary research centre based in SMU. It was established with an MOE Tier 3 social sciences research grant, as well as the generous support of The Ngee Ann Kongsi. Research at ROSA seeks to define and measure a holistic construct of well-being and to identify the factors that impact Singaporeans' well-being as they progress through the later phases of life. Through close collaboration with government and other partner agencies, ROSA also aims to translate research insights into policy innovations that advance the well-being of older adults holistically and promote successful ageing in Singapore. ROSA brings together a diverse team of leading international and local researchers in ageing and age-related issues from various disciplines. Through empirical evidence derived from a longitudinal methodological approach, the multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research team advances propositions that promote successful ageing in Singapore.

About Singapore Management University

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